

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 05867 231800Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T CAIRO 05867

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (ATHERTON, ALFRED L.) EG
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN OFFICIAL CRITICIZES ISRAELIS

1. DURING COURSE OF CONVERSATION ON OTHER SUBJECT,
DIRECTOR MFA LEGAL DEPARTMENT NABIL ELARABY TOLD POLCOUNS
FEBRUARY 23 THAT HE SAW LITTLE PROSPECT FOR PROGRESS
DURING ATHERTON MISSION BECAUSE OF ISRAELI INTRANSIGENCE
AND BEGIN'S MARCH VISIT TO U.S. IF ISRAELIS ARE PRE-
PARED TO MAKE ANY MOVES FORWARD, IN HIS VIEW, BEGIN WILL
WAIT AND DO IT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER.

2. ELARABY WAS PARTICULARLY DISTURBED BY ALLEGED
ISRAELI ATTEMPTS TO PLAY WITH LANGUAGE IN DECLARATION
OF PRINCIPLES. FOR EXAMPLE, THEY HAD, HE CLAIMED, LED
SECRETARY VANCE IN JANUARY INTO "TRAP" BY OBTAINING
HIS AGREEMENT TO LANGUAGE THAT DISTORTED 242 BY STATING
THAT WITHDRAWAL WILL TAKE PLACE "TO SECURE AND
RECOGNIZED BORDERS" WHEREAS THE LANGUAGE IN 242 DEALS
WITH WITHDRAWAL "FROM TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN THE RE-
CENT CONFLICT" AND IN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SECTION
WITH "SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES". EVEN IN PRE-
SENT VERSION, ELARABY CLAIMED, ISRAELIS ARE ATTEMPTING
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TO DISTORT MEANING OF 242. GIVEN THIS ATTITUDE ON PART
OF ISRAELIS, HE IS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT ANY PROGRESS.

3. WITH REGARD TO HAARETZ REPORT THAT WASHINGTON
CONCERNED OVER EGYPTIANS BACKING AWAY FROM ACCEPTANCE
PRESIDENT CARTER'S ASWAN LANGUAGE AND NOW INSISTING
ON SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINIANS AND WITHDRAWAL

FROM ALL SECTORS, ELARABY COMMENTED THAT HE PERSONALLY
OBJECTS TO THE ASWAN DECLARATION. HE SAID THE RIGHT
TO PARTICIPATE IN DETERMINATION OF THEIR FUTURE IS NOT
SELF-DETERMINATION. AS FAR AS HE IS CONCERNED, IT WOULD
BE BETTER FOR EGYPT TO GO AHEAD BILATERALLY WITH ISRAELIS
THAN TO DO THINGS TODAY THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY HARM THE
PALESTINIANS. THE TROUBLE WITH BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS
IS THAT THE ISRAELIS WOULD EXPLOIT TO THE LIMIT THE ISO-
LATION THAT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WOULD CAUSE FOR EGYPT,
THUS MAKING NEGOTIATIONS EVEN MORE DIFFICULT FOR EGYPT.
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